ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN MANITOBA

A SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS AND SUPERINTENDENTS OF ELEMENTARY-SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING
in Manitoba
SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS
(2001)

A. INTRODUCTION

In order to obtain an understanding of the extent to which Aboriginal language courses and programs are offered across Manitoba public and funded independent schools, Manitoba Education and Training initiated a field-based study in February 2001. Two survey instruments were developed: one aimed for school principal response, and the other for school division superintendents. Copies of these instruments can be found in Appendix 1.

The intent of both surveys was two-fold: (a) For the schools and divisions that offered Aboriginal language instruction, the intent was to solicit information pertaining to current and projected program delivery, curriculum and resource materials, and instructor development needs. (b) For schools and divisions that did not offer Aboriginal language instruction, the intent was to find out if they had offered this type of instruction in the past, their reasons for not offering it now, and their projected need in the future.

B. METHODOLOGY

All public school superintendents and the Catholic Schools Commission were sent a copy of the superintendent's questionnaire, and all public and funded-independent school principals in Manitoba were sent the principal's questionnaire. Questionnaires were sent from Manitoba Education and Training with an accompanying letter asking for their participation (copies of the letters can be found in Appendix 2). Francophone schools and Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (#49) received all materials in the French language.

The last date for receipt of the questionnaires was stated as March 2, 2001, although the real cut-off date was not until March 30, 2001. The distribution of questionnaires sent with those that responded is as follows:

	Number Surveys Sent	Number Surveys Returned	Response Rate
School Principals:			
Public Schools	712	220	31%
Funded Independent Schools	58	17	29%
	770	237	31%
Superintendents:			
Public School Divisions/Districts	54	43	80%
Catholic Schools Commission	1	1	100%
	55	44	80%

Four-fifths (80%) of superintendents and one-third (31%) of school principals had responded to the survey. Refer to Appendix 3 for list of participating and non-participating divisions/districts.

C. AVAILABILITY OF ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE COURSES

- Twenty-one of the 237 (9%) schools that responded to the survey reported that they offered Aboriginal language courses in 2000-01. Twenty of these schools were public, and one was funded-independent.
- The twenty-one public schools that offered Aboriginal language instruction were located within ten school divisions/districts (SD 1, 10, 11, 13, 35, 39, 31, 48, 49, 2355). Five schools were located in the City of Winnipeg, seven in southern Manitoba, and nine in northern Manitoba.

D. FEATURES OF LANGUAGE PROGRAMS THAT ARE OFFERED
(21 schools in 10 school division/districts)

Languages that are taught

- Four Aboriginal languages are taught within Manitoba schools:
  - Cree
  - Ojibway/Saulteaux
  - Dakota
  - Metis
- Cree and Ojibway/Saulteaux are the most widely offered languages (both Cree and Ojibway, languages in 3 schools, Cree by itself in 8 schools, and Ojiway/Saulteaux in 7 schools).
- Dakota is offered at 2 schools (both in SD#41) while Metis is offered in 1 school (in SD#49).

Who receives instruction

- 17 of the 21 schools provided information on the grade level and type of delivery method.
- The majority of schools offered language instruction in the elementary grades (ie, K-8) with the focus being on the early years.
- Eleven schools offered courses in elementary grades only, 4 schools secondary grades only, and 2 schools in both elementary and secondary grades.

How languages are taught

- Instruction was offered to students as either stand-alone courses (11 schools) or as part of a Native Studies program (6 schools). No courses were reported as being offered through distance education or as part of a bilingual program.
- Certified teachers provided the instruction in all schools that offered courses. Many schools, however also had parents, elders and/or community people helping in the classroom.

Current use of an Aboriginal languages curriculum

- 7 of the 21 schools that offered Aboriginal language instruction (33%) reported that they had a formal Aboriginal language curriculum. The remaining 14 schools (67%) did not have any form of curriculum.
- Of the 7 schools that had a curriculum, all were developed in-house by their own teachers. One school reported that they referred work done in Saskatchewan.

Desire for a province-wide Aboriginal languages curriculum

- Usefulness of a provincial curriculum - 18 of the 21 schools (86%) said that they would find a provincial curriculum to be useful, if one was to be developed. Two school principals were unsure and one said such a curriculum would not be useful.
- Grade level - 13 of the 18 schools interested in a provincial curriculum (72%) stated that development should begin with the elementary grades. Three schools said that curriculum should be developed for all grades, one school emphasized the senior years, and one school provided no answer.

- Language priority – Most school principals listed their priority languages as being the ones currently taught in their respective school, so Cree and Ojibway/Saulteaux were mentioned by 16 of the 21 schools (76%).
- Best method to develop a provincial curriculum – If a provincial curriculum was to be developed, 10 of the 21 schools (48%) felt it should be developed centrally by the Department in collaboration with school divisions and Aboriginal communities. Eight schools (38%) said it should be developed locally by school divisions with Department support and approval. One school felt it would be best if the curriculum was developed locally by school divisions without Department support and approval. Three principals did not answer this question.

Status of current resource materials

- Six of the 21 schools (29%) reported they currently had adequate student and teacher resource materials related to teaching Aboriginal languages.
- Of the 15 schools that did not have adequate resources, the resources listed most often as being needed included: student workbooks, learning kits, visual aides (games, posters), story books, readers, dictionaries, auditory aides (cassette recordings of songs, stories, etc), teachers who are fluent in the language, and resource people.

Teacher training needs re: Aboriginal languages

- When asked what types of training would benefit their school the most to enhance its delivery of Aboriginal languages, 16 of the 21 school principals (76%) selected "workshops and inservices". The distribution of responses for the various types of training were as follows: [keep in mind that principals were asked to check all applied, so the responses do not add up to 21].

	number of schools
workshops and inservices	16 (76%)
professional development conferences	13 (62%)
summer institutes	9 (43%)
university and/or community college programs	8 (38%)
distance delivery courses	2 (9%)

- When asked directly about the role of universities and colleges, the majority of principals supported an enhanced involvement. Greatest support was given to having a "certificate of Aboriginal language proficiency" (19 principals), followed by "undergraduate and graduate courses in Aboriginal language education" (16 principals), and then by "after-degree Aboriginal Language program (13 principals). Only 1 principal said "no" to these options, while the others were "not sure".

E. FEATURES OF SCHOOLS THAT DO NOT OFFER LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

(216 schools in 34 school divisions/districts)

Location of schools that did not have a program in 2000-01

- Of the 236 schools that responded to the survey, 216 (91%) stated that they did not offer an Aboriginal language program in the 2000-01 academic year.
- Ninety-eight of these schools (45%) were located in the City of Winnipeg, 111 (52%) in southern Manitoba, and 7 (3%) in northern Manitoba.

Availability of Aboriginal instruction in previous school years

- Nine of the 216 schools (4%) stated that they had a one time offered Aboriginal language instruction to their students. Thirteen schools (6%) stated that they were uncertain of the school's history, while the remaining 194 schools said they had never offered Aboriginal instruction (90%).

- Of the 9 schools that had offered language instruction in the past, the primary reasons for not offering it any longer were:
  - teacher left and couldn't find a replacement
  - students lost interest.

Reasons for currently not offering Aboriginal language instruction

- Both school principals and superintendents were asked why Aboriginal language instruction was not offered to students for the current school year (ie, 2000-01). Four reasons were listed in the questionnaire with instructions to check all reasons that applied. The following table shows how the principals and superintendents responded:

Reason	Principals	Superintendents
no demand	83%	76%
no one available to teach language	35%	12%
not enough financial resources	25%	6%
not enough teaching resource materials	15%	18%

- The primary reason for schools not offering Aboriginal language instruction in 2000-01was a perceived lack of demand. The majority of principals (179 of the 216 -> 83%) and superintendents (26 of 34 -> 76%) stated that there was "no demand" for Aboriginal language instruction in their respective schools.
- For both principals and superintendents, the ordering of the reasons was parallel. "Not enough teaching resource materials" was selected by the least number of respondents.
- Additional reasons for not offering Aboriginal language instruction that were added by principals and superintendents included:
  - not a priority
  - small number of Aboriginal students
  - focus is on other languages
  - it is not a formal curriculum requirement.

  One superintendent stated that their school division offers Aboriginal language instruction to parents and students as an evening program that has recently been developed in partnership with the community. Another superintendent stated that a partnership arrangement with the neighbouring Cree Nation allows students to obtain Aboriginal language instruction by participating in their course offerings.

Perceived need for Aboriginal language instruction in the future

- Principals and superintendents were both asked whether they believed that there may be a need to offer Aboriginal language instruction in the future.

	Principals	Superintendents
Yes	17%	30%
No	45%	23%
Not sure	38%	47%

- Nine of the 30superintendents, and 36 of the 213 principals, who answered this question stated that they believe there will be a need to offer Aboriginal language instruction in future years. This is a significant finding given the earlier reported survey result that showed Aboriginal language instruction currently being offered across 10 divisions/districts within 21 schools. If these predictions are correct, the future demand will more than double what it is today, being required in 19 divisions/districts and 47 schools.

- School principals were asked to comment on whether Aboriginal language instruction would be offered in their school if enhanced supports were made available to them. Forty principals (19%) said "yes", while 82 (39%) said "no", and 87 (42%) gave a qualified "no, supports are not the issue". Two-thirds of the principals who said "yes", were those who also stated that they foresaw a need for Aboriginal language instruction in their school in the future. The other third were principals who were uncertain about their future needs.
- The 40 principals who had said they would consider offering Aboriginal language instruction if enhanced supports were made available, were also asked to specify the types of supports that are most needed. The most supports listed the most were (with number of principals who stated such in brackets):
  - qualified instructors (25)
  - resource books, tapes, etc (13)
  - finances, funding, grants (11)
  - parent/community support and cultural considerations (7)
  - enhanced interest in students (7)

F. COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Both the principal and superintendent surveys asked all respondents to provide further information, comments, concerns and/or suggestions related to Aboriginal language instruction in Manitoba that they felt important for the Department to know. The number of respondents who provided added information included:

Currently with Aboriginal language instruction:

Superintendents	- 4 of 10 (40%)
Principals	- 16 of 21 (76%)

Currently without Aboriginal language instruction:

Superintendents	- 14 of 34 (41%)
Principals	- 87 of 216 (40%)

Highlights of the comments received are as follows:

Superintendents who currently offer Aboriginal language instruction

- We require greater support from the Department – curriculum, teacher preparation, professional development.
- It is difficult finding qualified Aboriginal language teachers.
- We are prepared to work in partnership with the Department to explore new initiatives.

Principals who currently offer Aboriginal language instruction

- The per capita funding system presents problems.
- Teachers need development time away from teaching responsibilities.
- Curriculum "guides" are needed rather than detailed curricula.
- Our program works! The Department should talk with us.
- There is a need for teachers who are fluent in Aboriginal languages.
- Learning resources provided by the Department are very outdated.
- Aboriginal language instruction is most successful in a learning environment that promotes cultural awareness and acceptance.

Superintendents who do NOT currently offer Aboriginal language instruction

- Our aboriginal communities do not have a common language. The variety of language needs makes delivery difficult.
- The Aboriginal population is growing in some areas of the province, but not in others.
- When there are small numbers of Aboriginal students, it is too hard to maintain their interest in learning an Aboriginal language.
- We would like to offer Aboriginal language instruction but funding restricts this from happening.
- Partnerships within the community provide students and adults with Aboriginal language instruction.

Principals who do NOT currently offer Aboriginal language instruction

- We have offered evening programs in the past, but discontinued due to lack of community support.
- If the Department gave a directive for schools to offer Aboriginal language instruction, we would.
- Our human and financial resources are limited. Small schools have tough priority decisions related to program offerings and staffing.
- The number of Aboriginal students in our school is growing, but due to budget constraints we can not offer Aboriginal language instruction.
- We would consider offering Aboriginal languages instead of French.
- If you lose the teacher responsible for delivering Aboriginal languages, it is too hard to find a replacement.
- Community interest and demand should be the determining factors as to whether a school offers Aboriginal language instruction.
- Currently we offer Aboriginal awareness programs. A need for language instruction may occur in the future.
- Language and culture go together. To learn a language, you need to be able to use it. Most Aboriginal students in our school do not come from families who speak an Aboriginal language.
- No one has ever requested that we offer Aboriginal language instruction.
- If Aboriginal languages were to be offered, the classes should be open to parents as well as students.
- We would like to introduce Aboriginal languages as a cultural awareness activity rather than try to make people fluent in another language.
- The Department should provide leadership.
- The Aboriginal Academic Achievement thrust is critical. The Department should provide schools with supports to facilitate the teaching of Aboriginal languages.
- For Aboriginal language instruction to be offered and successful, you need to ensure (a) there is a demand for it, (b) it starts at kindergarten, (c) you have a teacher that can pass on the love of the language, and (d) the language needs to be spoken at home.

****

Appendix .1.

SCHOOL-BASED SURVEY related to ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

School: _____ Principal: _____

Aboriginal Languages Contact (if other than the Principal): _____

Contact email address: _____

DOES YOUR SCHOOL OFFER ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES TO STUDENTS? YES ___ NO ___

If **YES**, please complete Sections 1 and 3.
If **NO**, please complete Sections 2 and 3.

SECTION .1. - For schools that offer Aboriginal Language Instruction (Q1 - Q8)

A. PROGRAM DELIVERY:

1. Please list the Aboriginal language(s) that are taught by your school.

_____ _____ _____

2. For each grade level and type of delivery mechanism, please write in the number of students you currently have enrolled in Aboriginal language instruction. Please note that students should not be counted more than once.

Grade Level	Regular In-School Study			Before and/or After School	Distance Delivery
	Stand Alone Course/Subject	Part of Bilingual Program	Part of Native Studies programming		
N					
K					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
S1					
S2					
S3					
S4					

3. Who is responsible for teaching Aboriginal languages in your school (eg, certified teachers, Elders, resource teachers, parents, community people, etc.)? List all that apply.

_____ _____

_____ _____

B. CURRICULUM and RESOURCE MATERIALS:

4. Does your school currently have a "formal curriculum" for Aboriginal language instruction?
   ____ Yes
   ____ No (please proceed to Q5)

   If yes, could you please provide the following description of this curriculum and/or other primary resources:

   (a) Title: _____

   (b) Year it was developed: _____

   (c) People who participated in its development (eg, school personnel, division personnel, community representative, people in another province or state, etc.):

   _____ _____

   _____ _____

5. If "provincial curricula" were to be developed for Aboriginal languages:

   a) What would be the 'best' method to have it developed? [check one response only]
      ____ centrally by the Department in collaboration with school divisions and Aboriginal communities
      ____ locally by school divisions with Department support and approval
      ____ locally by school divisions without Department support and approval
      ____ other. Please specify: _____

   b) What language or languages should be priorities for development? [list up to 3 languages]

   _____ _____ _____

   c) What grade levels should be addressed first? _____

   d) Would your school find provincial Aboriginal language curricula useful?
      ____ Yes
      ____ No
      ____ Not at the current time
      ____ Not sure

6. Does your school have adequate student and teacher resource materials related to teaching Aboriginal languages?
   ____ Yes
   ____ No ..... If no, what are the most important resources that are required? _____

   _____

   _____

C. INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT:

7. What types of training would benefit your school the most to enhance its delivery of Aboriginal languages? [check all that apply]
   ____ university and/or community college programs
   ____ summer institutes
   ____ workshops and inservices
   ____ distance delivery courses
   ____ professional development conferences
   ____ other (please specify) _____

8. Do you think the universities and colleges should offer each of the following programs to support the instruction of Aboriginal languages?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
(a) certification of Aboriginal language proficiency	___	___	___
(b) undergraduate and graduate courses in Aboriginal language education	___	___	___
(c) after-degree Aboriginal Language program	___	___	___

SECTION .2. - For schools that do NOT currently offer Aboriginal Language Instruction (Q9-12)

9. Has your school ever offered Aboriginal language instruction in the past?
   - ____ Don't know
   - ____ No
   - ____ Yes ..... Why was the program discontinued? _____

10. Why does your school currently not offer Aboriginal language instruction? [check all that apply]
   - ____ no demand
   - ____ not enough financial resources
   - ____ not enough teaching resource materials
   - ____ no one available to teach languages
   - ____ other (please specify) _____

11. Do you believe that there will be a need for your school to offer Aboriginal language instruction in the future?
   - ____ Yes
   - ____ No
   - ____ Don't know

12. Would your school consider offering Aboriginal language instruction if enhanced supports were made available?
   - ____ Not sure
   - ____ No, supports are not the issue
   - ____ Yes .... If yes, please specify what supports are needed. _____

SECTION .3. - For ALL schools

13. Please provide further information, concerns and/or suggestions that you feel are important for the Department to know.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE PROVIDED WILL HELP TO IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES ACROSS MANITOBA.

SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY
related to
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

School Division: _____

Superintendent: _____

1. Do any schools within your division currently offer Aboriginal language instruction?

   _____ Yes → Complete Section A and Comments
   _____ No → Complete Section B and Comments
   _____ Not sure → Complete Section B and Comments

Section A - School Divisions that currently offer Aboriginal language instruction

2. Please list the schools in your division that offer this instruction: (if more space is required, please attach another sheet of paper).

   _____ _____ _____
   _____ _____ _____
   _____ _____ _____
   _____ _____ _____
   _____ _____ _____

3. What Aboriginal languages are most in demand across your school division? [Please list]

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Does your school division have formal curricula for Aboriginal language instruction?

   _____ Yes
   _____ No

5. Would it be helpful to your schools if the Department initiated curriculum development in Aboriginal languages?

   _____ Yes
   _____ No

6. What types of support do you believe are required to enhance the instruction of Aboriginal languages in your school division?

   _____ _____
   _____ _____

7. Who is your division's primary contact for Aboriginal language instruction?

   Name: _____

   Email Address: _____

Section B - School Divisions that currently DO NOT offer Aboriginal language instruction

8. Why does your division currently not offer Aboriginal language instruction?

____ no demand
____ not enough financial resources
____ not enough teaching resource materials
____ no one available to teach Aboriginal languages
____ other. Please specify: _____

_____

9. Do you believe that there may be a need for some schools in your division in the future to offer Aboriginal language instruction?

_____ Yes
_____ No
_____ Not sure

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

IF YOU HAVE FURTHER INFORMATION, COMMENTS, AND/OR CONCERNS RELATED TO ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION THAT YOU FEEL IMPORTANT FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO KNOW, PLEASE ARTICULATE BELOW.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix .2.

LETTERS TO PRINCIPALS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

February 2001

To: Principals of Kindergarten to Senior 4 Schools
And Organizations Offering Aboriginal Language Programs

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth is conducting a survey on Aboriginal Languages. This school-based survey is intended to give us a much fuller and accurate picture of the state of programming in Aboriginal languages today and future possibilities. We are seeking to gather information pertaining to enrollment, program delivery, curriculum and resource materials, and instructor development. As part of this process, we ask that you please take a few minutes to complete the attached survey.

Your participation in the survey will provide valuable information to Manitoba Education, Training and Youth for future direction with the development of Aboriginal language programming.

While completing the survey, you may find that your responses to some questions may be longer than space permits on a page. If so, simply record the question's number and continue working on a separate page.

Please complete and return the survey by FAX (204) 948-3286 no later than **March 2, 2001**.

Any questions about the survey may be directed to Jean Britton at (204) 945-6178.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Claudette Toupin, Director
Research and Planning

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
HELEN SETTEE FOR

Juliette Sabot, Director
Native Education Directorate

Attachment(s)

February 2001

To: Superintendents and Directors of Education

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth is conducting a survey on Aboriginal Languages. The survey is intended to give us a much fuller and accurate picture of the state of programming in Aboriginal languages today and future possibilities. The survey being conducted is composed of two components: a principal's (school-based) and a superintendent's (division-based) survey. The school-based survey for principals is intended to gather information on issues pertaining to program delivery, curriculum, resource materials, and instructor development.

This superintendent's survey, which we are asking you to participate in, is intended to gather information related to Aboriginal language instruction, regardless of whether you offer it or not within your division/district. The survey also includes questions about learning resources and divisional contacts for Aboriginal languages in your division/district.

As part of this process, we ask that you please take a few minutes to complete the attached survey. Your participation will provide valuable information to Manitoba Education, Training and Youth for future direction with the development of Aboriginal language programming.

While completing the survey, you may find that your responses to some questions may be longer than space permits on a page. If so, simply record the question's number and continue working on a separate page.

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Claudette Toupin, Director
Research and Planning

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
HELEN SETTEE FOR

Juliette Sabot, Director
Native Education Directorate

Attachment(s)

Appendix .3.

List of School Divisions/Districts by Participation Status

Schools Divisions that Participated				School Divsions that did not Participate	
1	Winnipeg	34	Duck Mountain	3	Assiniboine South
2	St. James-Assiniboia	35	Swan Valley	18	Rhineland
4.	St.Boniface	36	Intermountain	19	Morris-Macdonald
5.	Fort Garry	37	Pelly Trail	20	White Horse Plain
6.	St.Vital	38	Birdtail	26	Garden Valley
9	River East	39	Rolling River	32	Turtle River
10	Seven Oaks	40	Brandon	42	Souris Valley
11	Lord Selkirk	41	Fort La Bosse	2264	Churchill
12	Transcona-Springfield	43	Antler	2309	Snow Lake
13	Agassiz	44	Turtle Mountain	2312	Lynn Lake
14	Seine	45	Kelsey	2439	Sprague
15	Hanover	46	Flin Flon		
16	Boundary	47	Western		
17	Red River	48	Frontier		
21	Interlake	49	Division scolaire franco-manitobaine		
22	Evergreen				
23	Lakeshore	50	Prairie Spirit		
24	Portage la Prairie	2155	Pine Falls		
25	Midland	2408	Whiteshell		
28	Mountain	2355	Mystery Lake		
30	Pine Creek	2460	Leaf Rapids		
31	Beautiful Plains				
33	Dauphin Ochre	8000	Catholic School Board		